patients in 2003 and this disease is spreading fast in several states, as per UN report;

(b) whether it is also a fact that drug-injecting is playing a major role in the menace; and

(c) if so, the action plan of Government to create awareness about this deadly disease among the people and to effectively control the menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATi PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. It is a fact that there are 51 lakh infections estimated in the year 2003. It is also estimated that 0.2% of infections are among injecting Drug Users (IDUs) in the country.

HIV infection is the earliest form of disease and it takes 8-10 year to develop as AIDS case.

2.58% of AIDS cases in the country are among Injecting Drug Users, out of 102733 AIDS cases reported to NACO till February 2005.

(c) The IEC activities of NACO are operationalised on two levels, at NACO, and through the State AIDS Control Societies, which design IEC Campaigns as per local requirements. A wide variety of activities are undertaken, ranging from use of television and radio, to folk drama, exhibitions, fairs, etc. to reach the audiences, especially in the rural areas. Inter personal communication methods are widely used as they have been seen to effect behaviours change. Each state develops its annual plan of action, and conducts activities in accordance. An IEC Committee at the state level, which has members from the various media units in the state, visualizes the plans, which are approved by NACO after in depth discussions.

Health hazard by mobile phones

553. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether many research reports suggest that there are health hazards to children from radio frequency transmission by using cellular phones;

(b) if so, whether Government have conducted any study to confirm this report;

(c) if so, the results thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (d) According to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the World Health Organization (WHO) is conducting research through international agency to identify links between use of mobile phones and its ill effects. However, according to published literature of WHO and other agencies, there is no conclusive evidence of adverse health effect of use of mobile phones on human beings.

Leprosy in India

554. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that according to the report of WHO, Leprosy has completely been eliminated globally except India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the plans of Government to eliminate leprosy through the active participation of NGOs and Central Leprosy Teaching and Research Institute?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) Elimination of leprosy is yet to be achieved in eight countries including India. However, India is making satisfactory progress towards achieving the goal of national elimination by December, 2005. The prevalence rate (PR) has come down from 57.6/10,000 in 1981 to 1.96 by the end of December, 2004. So far, 19 States/UTs have achieved elimination and another six States are close (PR 1-2/10,000) to achieve elimination.

(c) The Government proposer to eliminate leprosy through the existing health care infrastructure and the active participation of NGOs and Research Institutes set up for the purpose. With the integration of leprosy services